

Open Plan Productions presents

## [new work america]

*Touch* by Toni Press-Coffman

*Quake* by Melanie Marnich

*Mr. Marmalade* by Noah Haidle

*After Ashley* by Gina Gionfriddo

*Crumble (Lay Me Down Justin Timberlake)* by Sheila Callaghan

**A season of script-in-hand UK premieres of five dazzling new American plays, written by America's most exciting emergent writers, directed by three exciting new young international directors.**

*Touch* by Toni Press-Coffman. Directed by James Bounds.

Kyle Kalke, an astronomer since childhood, falls in love with flamboyant, outspoken, openhearted Zoe, who - astonishingly - loves him back. When she is kidnapped and murdered, Kyle barricades himself by devoting himself more feverishly to the cosmos...

**Toni Press-Coffman** was born and raised in NYC. Winner of several national playwriting awards including a NEA/TCG Playwright Residency Award, *Touch* has been produced at the Humana Festival at the Actors Theatre of Louisville, and in cities throughout the United States and Europe including a successful run off-Broadway. Toni is Literary Coordinator of Borderlands Theatre in Tucson.

*Quake* by Melanie Marnich. Directed by James Bounds.

Travelling across a rich and evocative American landscape, Lucy searches high, low and everywhere in between for the love of her life - inspired by a quirky female serial killer she meets along the way. A journey into the human heart.

**Melanie Marnich** has had work produced or developed at the 2005 Eugene O'Neill Theatre Conference, Hartford's Stage Brand: NEW Festival, the Women's Project's Women's Work Festival, Atlantic Theatre, Dallas Theater Center, Florida Stage, the Steppenwolf Theatre's First Look Festival, and at Manhattan Theatre Club. Two of her plays, *Tallgrass Gothic* and *Quake* have premiered at the Actors Theatre of Louisville's Humana Festival of New American Plays. She has received commissions from the Kennedy Center, Guthrie Theater, La Jolla Playhouse, Arena Stage and the Children's Theatre of Cincinnati. She is a Core Member of The Playwrights' Center and a member of New Dramatists.

*Mr Marmalade* by Noah Haidle. Directed by Athina Kasiou.

Four-year-old Lucy's imaginary lover Mr. Marmalade, a suave but busy businessman, has little time for her, so she creates a rich and exciting fantasy world to inhabit instead. Adult behaviour is refracted through child-like eyes in this charming and absurd comedy.

**Noah Haidle** trained at Juilliard as a Lila Acheson Wallace playwriting fellow. *Mr. Marmalade* has had readings at Manhattan Theatre Club, Roundabout Theatre Company and South Coast Repertory and had its world premiere at South Coast Repertory in California. His other plays include *Rad and Bone*, *Prince Marjorie*, *A Long History of Neglect* and *Kitty Kitty Kitty*.

*After Ashley* by Gina Gionfriddo. Directed by James Bounds.

This blisteringly funny and deeply affecting story presents a teenage boy navigating the joys and terrors of life - all through the distorting prism of a media firestorm. When a family tragedy deals the Hammond family a dose of dubious celebrity, Justin finds himself paralysed, unable to fully grieve or grow up. The only bright spot is a girl - but Justin can't decide if she's a saving angel or a self-interested groupie. In a world as weird as this one, she might just be both...

**Gina Gionfriddo** has received the Susan Smith Blackburn Prize, the Helen Merrill Award for Emerging Playwrights, a Lucille Lortel Fellowship, and a Rhode Island State Council on the Arts Fellowship. Her work includes *After Ashley* (Vineyard Theatre in New York and the Actors Theatre of Louisville), *U.S. Drag* (New York, Connecticut Rep, and published), and *Guinevere* (Eugene O'Neill Playwrights Conference).

*Crumble (Lay Me Down Justin Timberlake)* by Sheila Callaghan. Directed by Devon de Mayo.

After a catastrophe, the lives of eleven-year-old Janice and her mother are shattered, and their house runs to ruin. Janice turns to her dolls and dreams of N-Sync, while her mother finds solace in cooking and Harrison Ford, all under the watchful eye of their talkative and eagle-eyed once proud apartment...

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**Sheila Callaghan** has had plays produced and developed with Soho Rep, Playwright's Horizons, South Coast Repertory, Clubbed Thumb, The LARK, Actor's Theatre of Louisville, New Georges, and Moving Arts. She is the recipient of a 2000 Princess Grace Award for emerging artists, a 2001-02 Jerome Fellowship from the Playwright's Center in Minneapolis, a 2002 Chesley Prize for Lesbian Playwriting, a 2004 NYFA grant, a 2005 Cherry Lane Mentorship Fellow, a 2006 NYSCA grant, and the 2007 Susan Smith Blackburn Award. Her plays have been produced internationally in New Zealand, Norway, and the Czech Republic.

The plays are directed by:

**James Bounds** is the co-founder and Artistic Director of Open Plan Productions. His directing credits include the European premiere of Jordan Harrison's Humana-Award winning play, *Kid-Simple: a radio play in the flesh* (Bedlam Theatre, Edinburgh) *Hidden Light* (Baron's Court), *Find Me a Primitive Man*, *Peaches en Regalia*, *The M Word* (all Etcetera), *subVERSE* (Theatre 503), and *How I Learned to Drive* (C Central, Edinburgh). He has assisted Christopher Sandford on *Diamond* (King's Head) and Guy Retallack on *Future Me* (Theatre 503); **Devon de Mayo** is a young American director, trained at Middlesex University, as well as in Indonesia and Russia. She has worked extensively in Boston, London and Chicago. Her directing credits include *The World Over* (Evanston, USA), *Clouds* (Chicago, USA), *The Woolgatherer* (Hill Theatre, Gambier, USA) and *Ohio, Impromptu* (Middlesex University). In Chicago, she has assisted for Steppenwolf Theatre Company and the Mary-Arrchie Theatre Company; and **Athina Kasiou** is from Cyprus, and has trained at Emerson College, Boston, and Middlesex University. Her directing credits include *Who Stole Mee* (Canal Café, London), *Arachini* (ISI, Bali) and *Karagioziz Exposed* (Dublin FringeFest). In London, she has assisted Mick Gordon on *On Fear and Disgust* (Soho), Leon Rubin on *Private Jokes, Public Places* (New End), and John Russell Brown on *Malvolio and his Masters* and *Hamlet, the Outsider* (Southwark Playhouse).

**Open Plan Productions** is a dynamic young company, founded to stage contemporary American work in the UK. In the last twelve months, they have presented plays at the Edinburgh Fringe as well as the Etcetera and Baron's Court Theatres in London, including the UK premieres of *The M Word* by Academy-Award winner Alan Ball and *Kid-Simple: a radio play in the flesh* by Humana-Award winner Jordan Harrison.

"The strength of the cast and superb direction of James Bounds makes this a first class production. An absolute gem. Make it a priority" Pippa Tennant, *EdinburghGuide* on *Kid-Simple: a radio on the flesh*.

"James Bounds and Poppy Burton-Morgan's simple, intelligent production...was genuinely moving...a subtle, elegant performance" Natasha Tripney, *The Stage* on *Hidden Light*

Finborough Theatre, The Finborough, 118 Finborough Road, London SW10 9ED

Box Office 0870 4000 838 [www.finboroughtheatre.co.uk](http://www.finboroughtheatre.co.uk)

Sunday 7 October 2007 – *Touch* by Toni Press-Coffman. Directed by James Bounds.

Monday 8 October 2007 – *Quake* by Melanie Marnich. Directed by James Bounds.

Sunday 14 October – *Mr. Marmalade* by Noah Haidle. Directed by Athina Kasiou

Monday 15 October – *After Ashley* by Gina Gionfriddo. Directed by James Bounds

Sunday 21 October *Crumble (Lay Me Down Justin Timberlake)* by Sheila Callaghan. Directed by Devon de Mayo

Performances at 7.30pm. Tickets £7 all seats.

For more information, interviews and images, please contact

**Neil McPherson** on e-mail [admin@finboroughtheatre.co.uk](mailto:admin@finboroughtheatre.co.uk) or **07977 173135**

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